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K-a

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From Australia's Golden Age.....

"The CRIMSON COMET"

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Central Mailer: Jerry G. Bails, 22529 Karam Ct., Warren, Michigan

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NEW ADDRESSES (See last listing in K-a #15)

Steve Kelez, Box 457, Talmage, Calif. 95481
Dick Pryor, #8 Marquard Rd., Carmel Valley, Calif.
Roy Thomas, 177 Bleecher St., N.Y., N.Y.
Don & Maggie Thompson, 8786 Hendricks Rd., Mentor, Ohio 44060

Possible new foreign members:
Luis Gasca (Pres. Comic Club of Spain) Juan Olazabal, 3-6° San Sebastian, Spain (recently published an index to the comics in the movie serials)
Alfredo Castelli, VIA MEDARDO ROSSO, 15, MILANO, ITALY (looking for American corresondents interested in trading)

BLANK PAGES THIS ISSUE -- 2, 4, 36, 38, 39

whiz-bang subtle: sub-mariner meets aquaman or "glub! glub!"

Note: Comparisons of Marvel Comics to DC comics are a dime a dozen; if the truth were told, that dozen would be revealed to have been written by myself, but suffice it to say, I needed the dime. At any rate, not only have the readers enjoyed my deathless non-fiction, but also the comic heroes themselves. . .

Mighty hands churn through the water as a powerful figure cleaves the brine, heading toward the mainland, his speeding body leaving in its wake white windswept crests. . .

Namor: I, Prince Namor, ruler of Atlantis, leader of men, must answer this challange lest my people think me disgraced.

Cautiously, the mighty prince disappears behind a rock formation, his sullen expression belieing his regal gloriousness. . .

Namor: He who claims to be the rightful ruler of Atlantis lives here. And it is up to me to prove to not only my people but myself that I am, truly, Prince Namor, ruler of the seas, rightful possessor of the power of Imperius Rex.

Meanwhile, in a nearby palace, Aquaman was a go-go-going out of cokkeyed mind. . .

Aquaman (to Mera): Well, you've really done it this time.

Mera: But Aquaman, I. . .

Aquaman: No buts. You've gotten me into a fine mess.

Mera: Now look, darling, you've got to stick up for your rights. If you intend to be ruler of Atlantis, you'll absolutely have to meet the pretender ins Trial by Combat.

Aquaman: Now that's another thing. Trial by Combat. Gads. That went out with the ice ages. Haven't you ever heard of a jury of peers? "Let us reason together," and all that.

Mera: A jury of peers? You're joking. You know we don't grow vegetables here, darling. Especially intelligent ones.

To return to our underwater prince, the Sub-Mariner slowly reconnoitre'd the area, checking the underwater land in the style of the great military leader which he is. . .

Namor: Verily, this land doth have excellent protection. I, Prince Namor the First, could not have provided protection better.

Though he is one of the most powerful men ever to walk to face of the earth, though he be the greatest fighter, master of all weapons, and fin-to-fin combat, the mighty Sub-Mariner is nevertheless hesitant. . .for even a great leader must meditate when goin; into battle. . .

Namor: I must forge ahead, for he who hesitates recedsth. Against this challenger, I must surely not hope to have an advantage in power, for I am fighting him on his own ground. Instead, I must depend upon the force of surprise. For in surprise, there lay victory.

And yet, though his desire is to attack, his foot hesitates, his mind races; for he who men call the SubOMarinsr doth hesitate. . .

Namor: Why do I hesitate thusly? Why must I always be tortured by great fear which doth hang over my head? Why must I always fear that though I gained my birthright through violence, this is not the full answer -- and that in the end, it will be myself who pays? It is far better to attack and win than to hesitate and lose. And yet, I hesitate. Why? Why?

Meanwhile, dear reader, let us return to where the action is. . .

Aquaman: Listern, Mera, now that you've got me into this mess, we'll have to plan some stategy. Namor is awsome. His strength is greater than mine. He has more speed. He is far more intelligent. He possesses weapons unknown to mortal fish-man. What can I do against a force like him?

Mera: Rely on the element of surprise?

Aquaman: No, form a battering ram for me to use against that high-browed freep.

Mera: I'll just use my magic power to. . .GREAT GUPPIES! My magic power is gone.

Aquaman: What's so surprising about that? You never have it when I need it.

Mera: Oh, say, where is Aquababy?

Aquaman: I don't know. Maybe Aqualad knows. (To Aqualad) Hey, kid, where's our son?

Aqualad: Oh, Aquaman, don't desert me just because you've now got a son all your very own.

Aquaman: Don't worry, Aqualad. I won't desert you -- yet. But where's my son?

Aqualad: Gee, I don't know.

Mera: My babsy-wabsie.

Now that we've ended the more pacific portion of our little mellow dramine, we can get down to the action portion, for even as Mera voices her fear for her baby, the omnipotent Namor, Prince of the Seven Seas, ruler of all he surveys, surveyor of all he rules, has reached a momentous decision what is significant. . .

Namor: By hesitating, I do verily reject the birthright for which I fought so long and hard.* (*As seen by everyone with half a wit in Tales to Astonish # 71-76, or thereabouts -- Stan) Thus, I must proceed to the attack, I must destroy he who challenges my title, he who liks the upstart he is attacks my regal majesty. TO THE ATTACK.

And with these words still bubbling on his powerful lips, the Avenging son, Prince Namor the Sub-Mariner, he whom men fear, possessor of the Trident of Neptune, most honored and revered, Imperius Rex, charges at top speed, galvanized into action by recollection of his birthright, into the very heart of Atlantis. . .

Namor: FOR ATLANTIS.

Seconds later, guess who learns what's happening, baby? Aquaman, of course. . .

Guard: Aquaman, Prince Namor is attacking the palace.

Aquaman: What will I do? What will I do?

Mera: Attack.

Aquaman: Good thinking.

Aqualad: Take me with you.

Mera: No, he must do this alone.

Aqualad: Oh, Aquaman, please don't shuck me to the sharks just because you've got a new son. I can still be lots of help.

Aquaman: Don't worry, Aqualad, I'll never shuck you to the sharks, not so long as my baby is still too young to aid me.

Aqualad: Thank you, thank you.

Aquaman: But if you want, you and Mera can come out and watch the fight.

Mera: Let's go.

Valiantly, as though on their way to a Shindig, the three journey outside the royal palace.

Mera: There is he.

Aquaman: Yes.

Before their eyes, the three leaders of Atlantis see a sight which mortal man rarely sees -- and lives to tell of. The Mighty Namor, leader of endless undersea legions, swimming at top speed straight at them, his every mi fibre bent upon their destruction

his hatred written across every line in his face; and yet, in this engine of destruction, this fury of pent-up fighting power there remains that which is regal, for Namor, in love and hate, in anger and joy, is ever a prince. . .

Namor: I accept your challenge. Step Forward and meet your match.

Aquaman: No pointy-eared sardine is going to take my city away from me. Take that. And that. (He commands eels to givemx Namor shocks and has clams bite Namor's toes, respectively) ((Editor's Note: Aquaman possesses the power to command all creatures of the sea to do as he wishes.))

His body racked with excrutiating pain, thousands of volts of electricity coursing through his mighty torso, his bunions split, even still the Mighty Namor does not admit defeat. . .

Namor: You've launched the first attack, and I am almost stopped. But never has there been an attack which could halt the Mighty Namor, and never will there be such a one.

END OF PART ONE
BEGINNING OF PART TWO

In part one, Prince Namor accepted the challenge of Aquaman and attacked him but was captured by eels and clams commanded by Aquaman who has the power to command eels and clams. . .

With these words barely spoken, the Mighty Avenging Son flexes his toenails and the clams fly from his feet, even as he wrenches the slimy, squirming heads from the slippery eels.

Namor: There, and now we may fight man-to-man. It is you against me. My imperial might against all you can muster. But I fear I must warn you that none have ever bested the powerful son of Neptune, that no amount of force, no amount of trickery, no ammount of poetic liqence can ever hope to overcome the might which I control in these two powerful fists.*(*It is of interest to note that the Hulk and the Thing have both come close to thwarting Namor, and also Thor possibly has the strength to do so. - Clarifying Stan and Helpful Adam)

Even as the shark, swifter than a speeding barracuda, able to leap tall seaweed at a single flip, leaps to the attack, the mighty underwater Prince, trained to perfections in countless thousands of battles, his every sense alert to every possibility, the Avenging Son has leaped to the attack, leaving the shark in his wake. (Whew--exhausted Stan)

Namor: Aha. You didn't expect me to attack in this fashion. But now I have you in a full-nelson from which no mortal can even hope to escape.

The careful reader will note a few "x's" more than propriety and correct spelling require. The extra x's should not be pronounced, but are, instead, an attempt to cover up various mistakes.

Aquaman: Now that you mention it, maybe you ARE the rightful ruler. . .

Mera: Aqualad, save my husbad. Do something.

Aqualad: At last, something to do. (He tackles Namor)

Namor: Off, knave. No one may touch the regal personage without first requesting permission, for thy very touch is like unto that of a jellyfish.

Our blonde-haired water boy isn't exactly having a hullabaloo, right, readers? But never fear, for where there's a will, there's a dirty tactic. . .

Aquaman: I'll just (censored).

Namor: Uhh. Tho thy tactics be foul and the pain be great, yet it is the duty of the royal personage to withstand all obstacles an to battle onward and upward until victory is mine.

With these words, spoken in a voice wacked with pain, and yet spoken in commanding tones, as though from a fish born to command, the Sub-Mariner crawls to the attack, clutching his (censored) tightly. For hours the mighty battle rages until, finally, the two enemies stand just outside the city walls. . .

Namor: Thou fightest heavily. Yet, you make no gain. It is my imperial wish that we cease this fight for a rest period, if you be so willing.

Aquaman: Okay.

Namor: Good. This battle wearies me. Tell me, blonde-haired one, where thou findest so beautious a maid for ~~khaix~~ thy bride.

Aquaman: Oh, I picked her out of some other dimension.

Namor: She is verily the most stunning creature that I have seen beside whom the Lady Dorma pales in blueness.

Aquaman: Yeah. That's what I said when I first saw her. But, now, boy, has she proven that beauty is only scale deep.

Namor: What? Dost thou mean this beauty, more radiant than a 100 watt light bulb, regal in appearance beyond compare, as well as regal in title, is not truly a total beauty.

Aquaman: Come again?

Namor: You mean she's a fink?

By way of explaining the previously alluded to over-xing herein: I've run out of razor blades. I can speak from experience in this regard for I type badly. Thus I know what can be expected of a blade. With the Personna, I got fifty ditto masters per blade, whereas will other, inferior blades, I got no more than five.

Aquaman: Yeah, that's about the size of it. I mean, she's b beautiful and all that. But she's got me so henpecked I can't even go out at night with the Justice League guys.

Namor: Hmm. That is truly bad, for it would indeed be an honor to join so illustrious a group in the war against crime and injustice.

Aquaman: Well, Mera doesn't see it that way. She doesn't like the idea of nine guys going out with Wonder Woman. She's not so sure why she's called a "wonder."

Namor: A vixen, no less. Ah, but I would put her in her place if I were thee. For she is but a wench, and all wenches can be handled by might of mind.

Aquaman: But give a wench an inch and she'll take a mile. I figured, it's only fair, she washes and I dry. Well, have you ever tried to dry dishes underwater? It isn't easy.

Namor: Wash dishes? You, a pretender to the drown of Atlantis, deign to do so menial a task. It doth press my dredulity.

Aquaman: Well, you think that's bad, she thinks our son, Aquababy, is going to grow up to be a scholar, even though she knows I want him to be a fighter, like myself.

Namor: A scholar? Gadzooks, man. And ye stand it, ye be a scurvy knave. Are ye a man or are ye a guppy?

Aquaman: What can I do?

Namor: Treat her roughly, but with mercy. If she getteth out of hand, give her the back of yours. When she tries to assert her masculinity, remind her that you wear the tights in the family. She is but a woman and must do a woman's work.

Aquaman: You mean you've got Lady Dorma trained?

Namor: Trained? She is little more than a puppy dog. Namor is master of all he surveys -- and that includes she who will soon be Namora, Princess of Atlantis.

Aquaman: May I remind you that you title is still under debate.

Namor: Not debate, man, but under foolish dispute. There be no content for I am truly he who was meant to rule. Never have I surrendered.

Aquaman: Never even once? Oh come now.

Namor: Dost thou call me a liar? That my ears should never hear such blasphemy.

Aquaman: Don't get excited, I'm just surprised, is all. Why, just the other day, I was wrapped up aby a steel hand and no sooner had two panels gone by then I, Aquaman, had surrendered. (Editor's Note: See Aquaman #25)

Namor: In two panels? Holy Mackeral. Why, when I wast attacked by the faceless ones it took three months of battle before they came to realize that I would never, but never surrender whilst breath still fluttered within my lungs. (And any long-minded Marvelite who can remember exactly which issues these were deserves a no-prize -- forgetful Stan)

Aquaman: Ah, for the good old days. When I could fight to the death. When I could sell my life dearly, rather than surrender to live in dishonor. But now, what with my wife and kids, and Aqualad hanging around, I'm a family man. I've got to think of my family before making these decisions.

Namor: And tis not entirely bad to surrender. Discretion is, verily, the better part of valor. Moreover, though I fought endlessly, ceaselessly, and was physically exhausted at the conclusion, yet no gain was noticed on my side save victory, which you gained despite your cowardly surrender.

Aquaman: But still, I've enough fighting blood still in me to want to fight on. It's just my family -- I mean, I can't get insurance on my life to provide for their future.

Namor: But to be able to surrender, thus providing time for thinking,ffor planning, for expert cunning -- that is the life. Why, dost thou think Ullysses could have been so crafty had he stayed in the thick of battle? Could he have conceived the Trojan Horse were he suffering from battle fatigue.

Aquaman: True enough, of course. Even so, being married has its disadvantages. I mean, I haven't seen the surface world once in ages. I can never get away. The baby is always crying, or teething, or saying "Mama."

Namor: Tis just as well you don't. For I have been there and back and the picture on the surface is a sorry one. Wars, crime, disease, famine, draught, decadence, maiming, murder, sin, all the other vices to which man is claimant have become more prevalent than ever before. Itis indeed a sight capable of turning one's stomach.

Aquaman: But wouldn't you like to swing into those wives? To tackle them and maybe defeat them? Wouldn't it be great to feel that you are actually trying to do something for the surface people?

Namor: Nay, Aquaman. My duty, my birthfright, yay, even my very body and soul is dedicated but to one chore: the preservation of my people. It is my fate to be the guardian of my people

and these excursions to the surface are little more than an interruption. I would give anything to be free of them.

Aquaman: But it is so dull an existence. Signing laws. Striding regally through the crowds, never living dangerously, lest your death throw the kingdom into turnoil. Look at my case. Half the day I spend arguing with Mera, the other half scraping Aqualad off my leg, trying to convince him that I won't kick him out of my court.

Namor: But there is another thing. Aqualad is like a son to you. If only there were someone for me to train. Someone to mold into the form of the Sub-Mariner. They truly broke the mold when they made me and it has been my fondest desire to raise an heir to the throne.

Aquaman: Well, why don't you get married. I'm sure Lady Dorma would make an excellent mother.

Namor: Verily she would but for two things. Children give her hives and, moreover, she be sterile.

Aquaman: Take it from me. That's a blessing to rejoice for. For, unable to bear you a child, she'll never condemn you to a life of wet diapers. Oh the disgrace of it all. Aquaman, prince of the sea, ruller of all he surveys, changing the diaper of a mere stripling.

Namor: But that is what a man is for. Truly is it said that a man never stands so tall as when he stoops to help a child.

Aquaman: Perhaps, but it isn't for me. As far as I'm concerned, you've got the perfect set up, friend.

Namor: And for me, you've got the perfect set up.

Both (Together): Hey, what about a swap.

Namor: You can have Lady Dorma and all the excursions to the surface world you want.

Aquaman You can have Mera and all those wet diapers.

Namor: It will be you who tried to fight those insuperable surface evils.

Aquaman: And you who defends the city of Atlantis.

Namor: You who must put up with those stupid footnotes of Lee.

Aquaman: And you must stomach the straight-laced DC style.

Namor: You shall be as happy in your new life as I shall be in mine.

Sometime later, Aquaman, his mighty chest barely heaving despite the effort of a swim thousands of miles long, reached the secret

hideout of the Sub-Mariner's people where, commanding the people(s respect by his mere presence, he first meets. . .The Lady Dorma. . .

Aquaman: Dorma, from the very first moment I didst see thou* my heart told me we were made to be one. Marry me, vixen. (*Two seconds ago, for those you interested in the precision movements of Flo's wrist watch.)

Dorma: This is so sudden

Aquaman: There'll be no delay, wench. Marry me or I'll have your head. I am thy master.

Dorma: Kiss me.

Aquaman: Already you seek to order me about, trying to force me to do your menial labor. Take that and that. (Aquaman commands eels to give her electric shocks and commands clams to clamp on her toes, reppectively.)

Dorma: Ouch. Okay, okay. I'll marry you.

Aquaman: You're darn right you will. Take that. (he kisses her)

Meanwhile, gang, can you guess where our all-American water boy is? You guessed it. . .

Mera: And when you've finished changing his diaper, you can clean up the mess he made on the floor. Then. . .

Namor: Enough. Your shouting doth crinkle my ears. I will indeed change his diaper. But it is beneath my imperial duty to clean up said mess. Thus is will behoove you to do so before my wrath vents itself upon your person.

Mera: Are you threatening me, fish-face? Well, I never.

Namor: That hath been the shell which broke the oyster's back. Take that (he swings to strike her).

Mera: Strike a defenseless woman, will you. (She parries his blow and clobbers him with a hammer of hard water.)

Namor: You have done what no man has ever done -- knocked the mighty Namor off his feet.

Mera: Now will you clean up the mess and sweep the floor, then do the dishes, or do you want to try for a TKO in the second round?

Namor: Nay, Nay, I will do it, lest thou mighty fist crack my skull.

Mera: And speak to me with respect. And cut out all those thous and thees.

Namor: Okay, from now on I'll speak with respect, ma'am. And I'll never speak to you thee or thou.

Mera: Well, get to work. While you're off your feet, you can wax the floor, too.

Namor: Okay, okay. I'm a go-go-going. (To himself): Isn't marriage wonderful.

The ever-go-Go-GONE end.

At Last, 3/4 of a page, maybe even 7/8, for mailing comments. Yeah!

Fred Patten, et al: With Don Glut and all the other amateur movie makers, it is surprising that fandom has not yet made a group-film. I wonder if part of the fun of the next NY Con might not be getting a group of Kapa-Alphans together and shooting such a film.

So much for the mailing comments.

I must admit that I'm stuck with the rest of this space. Now, I could do like some of you -- put in a cartoon. But I can't draw. So I'll have to improvise.

In the near future: Probably in the very next Whiz-Bang will be an exact copy of a letter I sent to Richard Goldwater at Radio Comics. It is a discussion of some of the faults of the company which I thought might be of interest to you. By way of explanation, suffice it to say I've written many long letters to Goldwater, often picking stories apart panel by panel. This particular letter is the latest and, for fandom at large, the most interesting, I think.

Fan-eds out there (I guess there's one or two among us): In an early issue of RB-CC I'm going to devote as much space as necessary to zine-reviews. It's about time I got my hand into the fire; I've been entirely unhappy with the "Ego Crusher" reviews -- far too uncritical and mainly want to express my views on the matter at least once. Mind, now, I'm going to be critical and if you don't think your zine can stand the criticism, don't send it. Just to give you the perspective, I've got a one and a half page general criticism of Fantasy Illustrated which I just may use.

Speaking of fan-zines reminds me that I have one or two copies of Slam-Bang 4 and 5. Four, you'll recall, contains the epic Doctor Fate review which has drawn scowls and huzzahs alike from fandom. If you've never read a Doctor Fate story, you won't like this zine, but, if you're a connoisseur of More Fun, this is just what you wanted. As for number 5, it a 20 page, 75¢ "little magazine," devoted exclusively to a discussion of Superman. You don't have to like Superman to like this one; you merely have to have an intelligent interest in the comic medium.

While I'm on the subject, there will be a Slam-Bang 6 -- one of these days. Contributions are sort of solicited -- but before contributing, I'd advise you to read Slam-Bang 5 carefully -- I'm going in for more of the same in the future.

POW! BAM! ZAP!

BATMAN RETURNS

*Reprinted with permission from
EDITOR & PUBLISHER for March 5, 1966

The "Batman" craze, which is sweeping the country as a pop art and "Camp" fad and as a television series, is returning to newspaper comic pages, where it originated.

Jacob Liebowitz, president of National Periodical Publications, which owns the "Batman" character, and John W. Higgins, president of the Ledger Syndicate (Overseas Press Club Building, 54 W. 40th St., New York) announced that "Batman" will return to newspaper comic strips.

"We, at Ledger, are indeed proud to have been the syndicate chosen by Mr. Liebowitz to represent this tremendous property," said Mr. Higgins. "There were two of the giant syndicates in there bidding against us and it was fast and furious."

Big Craze

"Mr. Higgins was the first syndicate man to contact us way back in November last, before the craze hit," said Mr. Liebowitz. "We sort of figured that any syndicate that was this perceptive and aggresive deserved to get it."

Bob Kane started "Batman" as a newspaper comic strip 23 years ago and dropped it when he entered the Armed Forces.

Mr. Kane is now returning to his caped crusader and his sidekick "Boy Wonder-Robin." He and his staff are working almost around the clock to get a new daily strip and Sunday color page ready for early release. The subject matter will have no connection with the television story line.

The syndicate is planning for the Sunday color page to break first. It will be in standard half, third and tabloid sizes.

Hits Big Time

"Batman" hit TV's top 10 since going on the air in January. Comic books are selling in the millions of copies throughout the world.

" 'Batman' is not a by-product of TV but the TV program is a by-product of what was originally a newspaper feature," pointed out Peter Sheehan of the Ledger Syndicate. "All we are now doing is bringing the strip and Sunday page up to date and returning it to its original media--newspapers."

"The kids will love it for its deeds of derring-do and the adult newspaper readers are going to see the Tongue-in-cheek camp and humor of it all," predicted Bob Kane. "To bring this across, I have developed a new art style that is pop, hard, clean and flexible and best suited to express both the action and humor contained in the script."

Mr. Liebowitz said a comercial campaign is planned for next fall for Batcapes, the Batsong and Batglasses.

Gleeps! Holy Barracuda!

BATS in the BELFRY

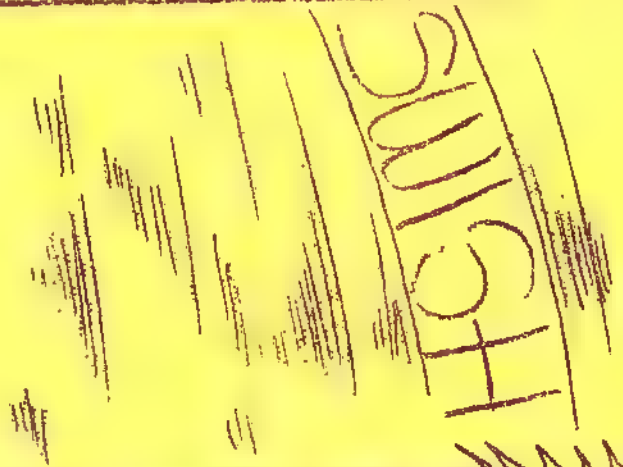
by Steve (Ling-Wong) Kolez

Regarding the preceeding article it is full of inaccuracies, as well as some misleading information.

First off, as we all know, Batman originated in detective comics. Most likely, the linking of the strip to the newspaper comics section is to induce a greater interest in selling the feature. What newspaper wouldn't like to herald the return of Batman to its pages with the caption: "Batman returns today to his original birth place, the comic page." Or something to that effect.

One of the biggest deceptions is that Bob Kane will handle the strip. Jarmine Infantino will be on the pencils, and possibly Murphy Anderson on the inks. I know for sure that Mr. Infantino will be there, for the article printed a panel from the strip, and Infantino's style is easily decernable. I guess at Anderson simply because it does look like his inks, and that they make a good team.

In fact, I doubt if Bob Kane will have anything to do with this new strip. It seems that this is always the case. Mr. Kane gets credit for everything featuring Batman. Why this synonymous linkage is a good question indeed. Of course Mr. Kane created the cowled crusader, so I give him all the credit. But there it stops in my uninformed mind. Kane never was the best artist to handle the strip, in fact I would say he was one of the poorer



In contrast, it is interesting to note that Siegel and Shuster never get any by lines or credit for creating the most popular comic hero, Superman.

As for the statement, "..... the action and humor contained in the script.", and ".....the tongue-in-cheek camp and humor of it all." could well be misleading also. The strip may be played this way, but I don't think so.

DC is in complete charge of the production of the strip. In fact all art is returned to National after mattes and plates have been made. It is therefore not too much to assume that DC will present Batman the same as it does in the comic, except that code restrictions will not be as strict. If this is the case, then we can be looking forward to a very good "return" of Batman.

For those readers who live in the San Francisco Bay area you can look for Batman to appear in the SF Chronicle. Otherwise, you better start searching those Sunday comic sections.

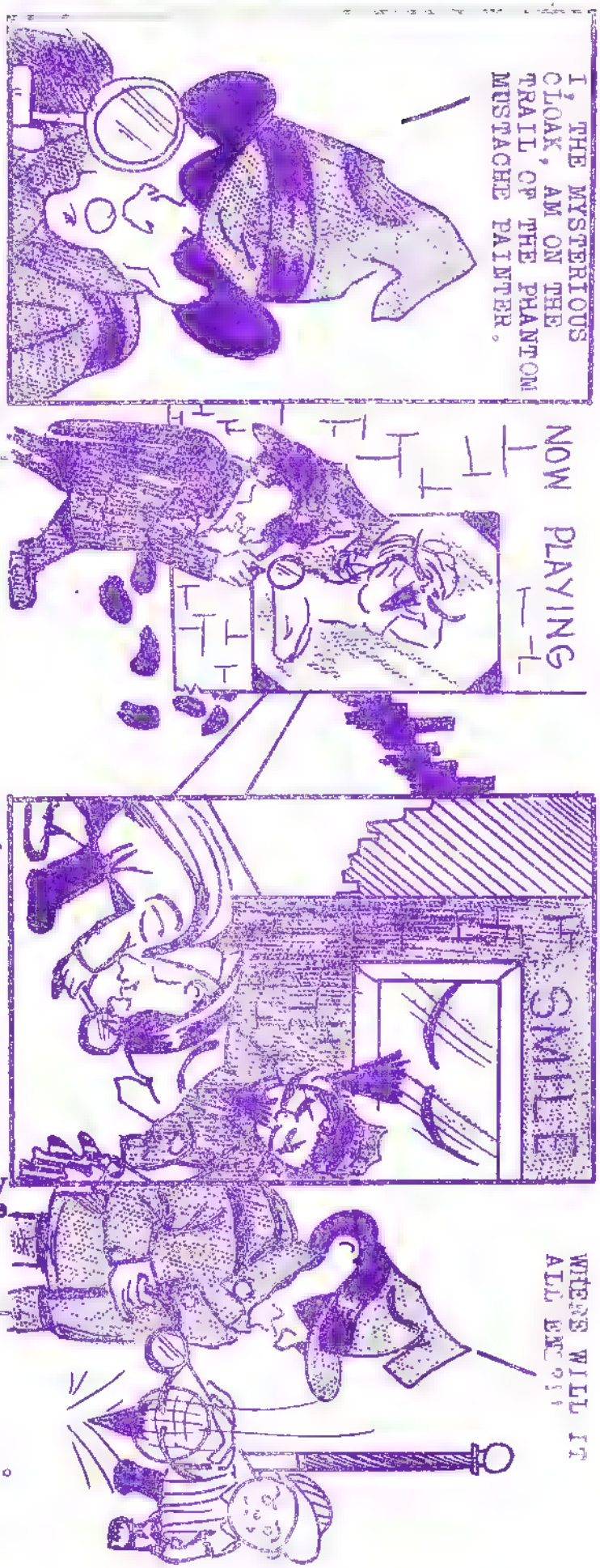
.....

Judging from the March issue of TV GUIDE it seems that the majority of critics are not too enthusiastic about the Batman TV series.

The attempt at 'camp' humor seems to have failed with them, and probably a large majority of the adult viewing audience. I know many people who watched the first episode and then fled from the tube.

The humor has been reduced to that of absurdity. The most appalling comes in the form of such asinine revelations as when Batman discovers the Robin-disguised Jill St. John by the "tiny holes in her mask." Just imaginning Jill St. John disguised as Robin is ludicrous.

And when Batman isn't affected



by the intense cold of [illegible]'s environment due to his "[illegible]-ial Thermo-nuclear Bat-underwear," will it's time to go to the BATroom? Oh good grief?

The other interesting aspect of the show is the use of "matted" in sound effects. Other than the direct relationship with the comic book, they serve no useful purpose. For the most, these exclamations of force and power tend to confuse the visual. Sometimes I can't even tell who's hitting who, or getting conked, for that matter.

These noiseless sound effects also seem to cover up a rather sloppy job of camera work, and fight choreography. In a recent episode of Honey West was a fight sequence that made Batman look like a shadow boxer. For a dynamic action character, Batman is sorely lacking.

The best facet of the Batman series is easily the great villains. Top character actors breathe more life into their roles with each appearance. Burgess Meredith is a delight as the waddling Penguin. If only a little more character could be added to Batman and Robin as with the villains, the show would be a lot more bearable.

One can only wonder what will be happening to such characters as the Green Hornet, Wonder Woman (I heard that Anita Ekberg was interested in this role), the Shadow, the Phantom and Mandrake? Blasphemy! Holy character assasination?

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This month (March) Columbia Comm[illegible] released chapter 2 of its 1943 Batman serial. The results are quite good, and for the first two chapters they have edited the original episodes. This will also be the case with the [illegible] chapter 5 and 6, which are actually #'s 14 and 15. The middle episodes will be a condensed version of the remaining chapters.

Compared to other 8mm home films on the market, these chapters are far above the average. Superimposed subtitles are used extensively making the films quite intellegent.

Of particular interest is the cliff-hanger ending. Like the original serial endings a preview of the next chapter is given with an intriguing subtitle.

Now the only problem is, what does the person who has never seen the original do during the month wait between chapter release? Oh no? Not that? You don't mean.....watching the TV show??

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Add one more new record to the list of 4 Batman albums now out. I've been told by a local radio station that [illegible] will soon have out some sort of 'tales of Batman.' This is something like a radio show I believe. Now we can really drive the neighbors batty. (ouch)

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

[illegible] don't let the Phantom [illegible] the Hunter get you.

HEAVY WATER No 11

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Well, the Bat-boom is on us with a vengeance, and am I ever glad that I'm not a completist collector in the field of comic-book memorabilia! Those who are, who collect all the newspaper clippings about comic books, the plastic model kits of the costumed heroes, the "authorized" buttons and pins and T-shirts and the like, and so on, are going to go crazy, or broke, or both, trying to keep up with the flood of Batmania that's suddenly gushing across the country.

The dam burst in January, with the release of the "Batman" television program, although things had been building up to this for quite a while. I think that credit can be given to four major events that correlated in making all America comic-book conscious: the appearance of organized Comics Fandom and collectors willing to pay high prices for old comics, in the last five years; the "discovery" of comic books by the Intelligensia style-setters, among both the Pop Artists who discovered comic art as a whole, and the "camp"-seeking college In-group who unearthed the old 1943 Columbia "Batman" serial; the publication of Jules Feiffer's book on The Great Comic Book Heroes, which first made the general public aware of the two aforementioned groups and of comic books as something more than just preteen ephemeral reading matter; and, finally, the new "Batman" television program, which has combined the Comics Fans and the "camp" followers, and brought the whole pot to a boil on the hotplate of public interest.

Lyndon Johnson as Batman

"OK, men! We're ready to beat the rascally Russians to the moon!"

Oliphant — Denver Post

Quality — or the lack of same — aside, there's no denying that "Batman" — the television show — is a smash hit, as the American public's fad-of-the-moment. Especially on the nation's college campuses: the day following the first show, students arriving at the USC campus discovered a flag displaying the Bat-signal fluttering from the tower of the new World Affairs Center. In a class at CalTech, the lights suddenly went out, the Bat-signal flashed across the room onto the blackboard, and two students

in the front row (one tall, one short) jumped up, cried, "That's our signal!", and raced down the aisle out of the room. (To the bewilderment of the professor, who had to have the rest of the class explain about "Batman" to him.) A fraternity house was turned into "Wayne Manor" for a party, complete with a Bat Cave and the trimmings; and a coffee-house in Santa Monica was hastily redecorated to reopen as The Bat-Cave.

Robert Kennedy as Batman

"Will Batman and Robin get out of this one? . . . Don't miss tomorrow's episode!!"

Conrad — Los Angeles Times

The "Batman" theme song has made it to the Hit Parade in several different recordings, and a new rock-&-roll group ("Robin and the Batmen") has taken the motif as its theme. "Batman" parody skits are to be found among almost every night-club comic's routine, and on almost every television comedian's show. (A "Man from U.N.C.L.E." episode called "The Bat Cave Affair" is upcoming this week.) Bat-jokes have replaced Tom Swifties and Elephant Jokes as the current humor fad; a $1 paperbound collection has already made its appearance — It's Fun To Be A Batman, by Leonard Goldstein. "I Gave for Batman" became the theme of this year's Blood Drive (on the USC campus, at least); donors got black-bat-on-yellow buttons with the above legend. The nation's merchandisers are capitalizing on the craze in as many ways as possible: there are automobile bumper stickers ("Send BATMAN to Vietnam"; "BATMAN for Governor"; "Protected by BATMAN"; etc.), poster-size reproductions of panels from the comic book or from the cartoon credits from the tv program, cheap Bat-buttons and Bat-rings, expensive children's Bat-costumes, and even Bat-hairstyles. Toy manufacturers have promised that this year's Christmas releases will add Batman to the present lineup of James Bond and Napoleon Solo, in "authorizing" costumes, games, toys with hidden compartments or that turn into weapons or that blow up when handled by "unauthorized" personnel, etc. Disc-jockeys are holding Bat-contests and forming Bat-clubs; "Charter Member - Batman & Robin Society" reads one pin available in dime stores. Articles and news releases on comic books in general and the "Batman" show in particular are to be found in general magazines such as LIFE, LOOK, TV GUIDE, and the like — the current MACLEAN'S, one of Canada's top slick magazines, has a special BATMAN adventure by Bob Kane, incorporating elements of both the televis-

ion show and the local political scene; "Holy Fleur-de-Lis!" exclaims Robin as he and Batman rescue Prime Minister Pearson from the Mafia, only to be dismissed for their troubles because they don't pun bilingually enough for the Canadians (a French-speaking Superman takes their place) -- and in almost every newspaper in the country. And last, but by no means least, is the adaptation of the "Batman" motif by political cartoonists all over the country -- three examples are reprinted here; there are others. When a political cartoonist appropriates a theme for his work, you may be sure that it's one that is both timely and familiar to <u>everybody</u>!

And if all this is stunning to the Comic Collector, just imagine how he's going to feel once next season's television shows hit the screen. Already announced as picked up for television or motion picture viewing, in live-action or cartoon format, are the Green Hornet, the Shadow, Wonder Woman, Superman <u>and</u> Superboy, Aquaman, Spider-Man, Captain America, Sub-Mariner, and a host of others -- all of whom will doubtlessly foster floods of their own of merchandising items, newspaper and magazine articles, etc. If there is a Comic Book Library anywhere attempting to keep track of everything pertaining to the comic-book industry and art that is released, it will have to build several new wings to contain the ocean of new material that is now flooding the country, and that can be expected to continue to do so for the next couple of years, at least.

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Now that the Bat-boom <u>has</u> arrived, though, we can all sit back and relax in the glow of national publicity that's come to our little microcosm, happy in the knowledge that comic books are finally getting all the public recognition that we've long known was their just due. Or can we?

Certainly, the current wave of mundane hysterical interest in comic books is healthier for the field than was the last -- the anti-comic-book witch hunt of Dr. Wertham fame, in the early '50's. But in the long run, I wonder if the current boom is going to prove that much more beneficial, in the literary sense? The position that literature and art in the comic-book format <u>can</u> have real merit (even if it usually doesn't) is hardly one that has been supported by the current craze, which is playing up comic books from the "camp" viewpoint: the reason that they're so good is that they're really so bad!

The keynote is idiocy. Idiocy "revealed" by the publisher (television producer, news reporter, etc.) for the edification of his audience, as a big joke that <u>they</u>'re all in on, being superior to the idiots who "believe" in it. If some people are paying large prices (usually quoted at an unrealistic $100 and upwards) for old comics, it's not because there's any heretofore unrecognized value in the comics, but because these people are idiots. Anyone who likes "Batman" for any reason other than because it's so bad, so corny, so ridiculous, is an idiot. The people involved with the show are idiots: LIFE (March 11) reported, "Batman (Adam West) is serious about his work. He said he couldn't just plain jump, but had to know <u>why</u> he was jumping. We told him he was leaping into the fray to vanquish a gang of interlopers. He said, 'Ah, good. I have to be motivated.'" (Was he trying to put LIFE on, or were they both trying to put us on?)* Even a newspaper article about one of the props on the show -- "BATMOBILE REVEALED AS FORD IN DISGUISE. New York -- The Batmobile (VROOM, POW, SCREECH), the sleek and unique automobile driven by that crime buster Batman with his chum Robin (BIFF, THONK, FLERGH) was built originally by Ford Motor Co. at a cost of $250,000 the company has disclosed. Asked about the cost, a Ford spokesman exclaimed, "Holy Transaxles!" The company said the car was handcrafted (PURR, BANG, RUB) by its Dearborn (Mich.) styling center in 1955 as a one-of-a-kind experimental vehicle. ..." -- is written almost as though to imply that the company that made it ten years earlier for mundane reasons must be run by idiots because of what it's currently being used for.

* The cover for this same issue of LIFE shows Adam West as a giggly Batman, looking as though he's on LSD.

What's wrong with all this is best summed up by Charles Champlin in his column in the Los Angeles Times for Feb. 28, which I am taking the liberty of reprinting here because I agree with it so thoroughly:

> "Batman is now firmly enshrined as the boffo, socko, geewhizerooney showbiz smash of our times, the greatest thing since the safety pin, the graham cracker and soft ice cream, but greater than any. It is high-piled in ratings, merchandised beyond the dreams of avarice, affecting our speech-patterns, wreaking insomnia the length and breadth of Madison Avenue, shaping our televiewing for years to come.
>
> It is also a listless, tasteless, witless, styleless, humorless bore of staggering proportions. It was born of a devout and monumental cynicism toward the television audience that has probably not been equalled since Hair-raising Tales of pre-coaxial cable days, or since the last used-car commercial.
>
> Theoretically, very theoretically, the Batman boys have got everything going great for them. They've supposedly come up with that creator's dream, the criticism-proof creation. If the critic says it's a terrible show, the lads can nod eagerly and say, "But of course. That's the whole point. It's supposed to be bad. And the worse the better." The critic who crosses his heart and says the show is good, on the other hand, is not likely to be asked to make a retraction: of course it's good.

Achmed Sukarno as Batman

"Will Batman escape this diabolical plot? Tune in next week . . ."

Sanders — Kansas City Star

This concept of goodness arising out of deliberate badness or indeed out of any kind of badness is very moderne. It must in fact give Henry Ford the screaming fits to think that it has all happened too late to do the Edsel any good.

In a way, this new development has probably been inevitable. The big fictional item in the postwar years has been the anti-hero, the unregenerate bum whose cheating, thieving, wife-beating propensities made sense because he was a product of our time. What could you do for an encore except come along with the anti-value?

An upside-down world in which bad is good and good is bad and old is new and new is stale is a marvelous luxury — a chance to make foolish judgments because of a presumed lack of any need to make serious judgments on serious matters. It eliminates the need for criticism because a simple whim will suffice — only assuming the whimmers are a peer group.

The great rationalization for Batman and the others who will soon join him on the bandwagon is that it's camp, it's pop. ("There, in the sky, it's camp! It's pop! It's spoofertime!") Thereby invoking two of the most misshapen words in the language.

"Camp," as I get it, began as a vaudeville term for performers or acts that a later day would probably have called swishy. Maybe a half-dozen years ago it showed up in a slightly wider meaning, covering things as well as people who were precious, inordinately stylized, outrageously removed from what anybody regarded as the norm. As usual, mass use brought further fuzzing-up of meaning, as well as a whole mystique of high camp, low camp and middle-camp. But what is still involved, basically, is a bent and supercilious view of the world.

Pop art as a term can, so far as I know, be ascribed to one man, Laurence Alloway, an English art critic. And what he had in mind, I think, was populist art or popular art -- the notion that things existed in our society which were neither created nor intended as works of art but which were part of the "art" we are all exposed to. Thus the outsized paintings of soup cans and comic strips and the collages of labels, headlines, magazine covers and cigarette packages. It may have got out of hand, but philosophically it was a reasonable attempt to break down the barriers of "art" as something exclusive, refined and removed from every day reality.

What "pop" is taken to mean presently, I don't really know. But it has, I think, acquired some overtones of derision that weren't there in the beginning. Pop has become a snob word for enthusing over bad taste. But it began, if I'm right, as an acknowledgement of the sometimes gaudy vigor of a mass culture.

To get back to Batman, and I guess we have to, to be true camp or true pop art, it would have had to take itself seriously, as The Lone Ranger or Superman television series did, and be unintentionally funny. Instead, it giggles "Aren't we devils" with the infectious gaiety of a man wearing a lampshade at a cocktail party, and the in crowd enjoys a few sniggers at the Batman-Robin relationship.

To be a true parody, as the show attempts to be, is hugely difficult because you start with fantasy rather than reality. It requires a power of invention, a sense of style, a feeling for the genuinely absurd and a production budget that have been denied the series.

Batman in his wrinkled sweatshirt and fetishist hood looks like a refugee from a third-rate costume party. The Batmobile obviously could not outrace a Baker Electric and the Batcave looks like a warehouse for obsolete pinball machines. The villains are so much smarter than Batman (and reveal what little ingenuity goes into the show) that Batman manifestly couldn't win a round if the game weren't fixed. An anti-hero at least has the courage of his lack of convictions. The semi-detached hero is a new breed.

It'll never do."

And what's wrong with all this as far as we're concerned is that it hasn't improved the public image of the comic book media a bit; if anything, it's given the field an even lower reputation as far as the possibilities for literary merit are concerned. Before "Batman", we had at least a theoretical chance of convincing the man in the street that there was something to be said for the comic book -- he didn't really know enough about them to have a closed mind on the subject. Now, though, he's convinced that comic books are necessarily absolute trash, doomed by a malignancy inseperably inherent in the literary format; and if we see anything of value in them at all -- why, then, we must be idiots, to be humored possibly, but certainly not listened to seriously. So we aren't going to get much satisfaction out of pointing with pride to our comic collections and saying, "See what real merit there is in them?", after all. Frankly, if I told someone I was a panelologist, I'd be surprised if he kept a straight face. I think my opinion of the new "Batman" show can best be summed up by the one word: Frustrating.

PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, March 21, 1966:

A Batman anthology of reprints from the early comic book adventures of the caped crusader is being rushed into a 750,000-copy paperback printing by New American Library. The 50-cent book, entitled "Batman", will contain eight episodes in a black and white version drawn by Bob Kane, the creator-artist of Batman and his young sidekick Robin.

At the same time, NAL will bring out a three-part novelization by Winston Lyon entitled "Batman vs. Three Villains of Doom." The classic opponents in this 50-cent paperback are the Joker, the Penguin and Catwoman.

Both paperbacks are scheduled for shipment on March 25, 10 days after all material reaches the printer. They will be published on April 21 by arrangement with National Periodical Publications, Inc., owners of the Batman reprint rights and publishers of Batman comics. The books will be available through NAL's paperback distributor, Independent News Company, a subsidiary of National Publications.

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Ted White, in L #18:

A month or two ago I was making cryptic remarks about a new project of some interest to fans, and about my interest in seeing Batman succeed on TV. Well, I can now reveal that the project was torpedoed, and I couldn't care less about Batman's success.

Early last fall, my agent told me there would be a Batman tv show, and asked me if I'd like to write a Batman novel, for Bantam Books. I agreed with some enthusiasm, and then he began unravelling the legalities of a show co-owned by 20th Century-Fox and National Comics.

At first there was the usual buck-passing ("I haven't any control over that"), but at last it came down to a simple fact: National runs a distributing company (which distributes, among other things, the Marvel comics line), and distributes Signet Books. When originally agreeing upon this, Signet pressed for, and got, exclusive rights to any and all books resulting from National Comics characters.

Thus, 20th Century-Fox was happy with the idea of a Batman book. And National liked the idea. But while Bantam wanted to do it, first chance must go to Signet.

Signet dithered. They 'couldn't make up their minds'. And time started running out; the show was on the air already, and a book should have been written. Meanwhile, my agent and I waited, anxiously, for news of whether Signet would be going ahead with the book or relinquishing it to Bantam.

PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY broke the story, to my agent's total surprise. It seems Signet had already, very quietly, and without telling anyone, bought a Batman book, apparently an unsold juvenile slightly reworked. My agent hit the ceiling, and everyone at National was very embarrassed. And I was out the book.

... My Batman book -- the one which will never be written now -- would have harkened back to the Good Old Days. The main villains would've been the Joker and Two-Face -- with one startling difference: Batman had been hypnotized into becoming Two-Face himself. (After the tv show started, I thought of adding in the Catwoman as a sympathetic character.)

As a postscript, at least a friend of mine got to do Batman -- on gum cards. Yes, Larry Ivie, intrepid Topps Bubble Gum Card writer, has written the stories for five Batman sequences of eleven cards each. The art was pencilled by Bob Powell (S.R.Powell, to you old-timers), and Larry says it was very good. But the over-painting was by different artists, some of whom were wretched, and the quality varies enormously.

PANGOLIN 6

Published for the April, 1966 mailing of CAPA-alpha, by Al Kuhfeld, who lives at: 816 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis, Minn.

A POSTULATIONAL ETHICS, 2: CENSORSHIP

As you may recall, in PANGOLIN 5 I discussed the relations between morals, ethics, and the world. The result was a set of ten assumptions and restrictions basic to my ethical system. Let us now examine censorship (both of comics and in general) in the light of these ten rules.

The first and second axioms apparently preclude any censorship whatsoever, except of falsehood. For if the probability of correct behavior is proportional to the quantity of correct information possessed and inversely proportional to the amount of incorrect information, any control of the transmission and dispersion of information should operate to decrease the total amount of falsehoods available and increase the amount of truth. Since it is hardly feasible to force people to print the truth, all that can be done is to prevent them from printing lies.

Now, defining a "lie" can be rather difficult at times. The Catholic Church proclaims, "Error has no rights over truth". This is fine as far as it goes, but when "error" is defined as any disagreement with Catholic dogma.... Pravda is the only Russian word meaning "truth"—but since the Communists have taken power, the definition of pravda has shifted around to include "the Party line". Lysenkoism is the tragic result of this confusion; Stalin said Lysenko was right, so Lysenko was right whether he was right or not. Especially when those who were so unpatriotic as to disagree had an extremely suspicious habit of disappearing. In almost all cases, "falsehood" comes to mean "what those with sufficient power abhor hearing said". And so it is dangerous to suppress "lies", even when there is substantial agreement that they are lies—for they may not be lies at all, but only unpopular truths.

Sometimes determination of falsehood is easy. If I say that the sun rises each day at precisely noon, that a compass will point due East in Minneapolis, or that pigs can fly--there's little doubt that I'm spouting nonsense. If I distribute far and wide a pamphlet stating that moderate daily doses of arsenic will stimulate the digestion, I am spouting dangerous nonsense. This sort of thing deserves to be stomped on, and there is little difficulty in deciding whether a given statement belongs to this class of lies.

Lies are to be discouraged if it can be shown unequivocally that they are lies. What about truth? Well, I cheated a bit earlier, for the first axiom assumes a rational behavior on the part of the creature receiving the information. Children (for example) are not considered to be rational organisms capable of ordering their own lives. They are forced to do many things they dislike, upon the premise that adults are more rational than children and hence more capable of ordering the child's life. Although some applications of this are open to doubt, the principle itself is generally accepted. Therefore, arguments assuming rationality are not applicable per se to children. Proper information flow to children should result in the greatest possible rationality upon attaining adult status, with the greatest possible store of correct information and the least feasible amount of misinformation.

I shall assume that however irrational the creature, correct behavior is never promoted by incorrect information. It is true that it's possible to do the right thing for the wrong reasons; it is equally possible to do the right thing for no reason at all. I can conceive of only one situation in which the truth will lead to decreased rationality: when the organism has previously been fed lies. Any one false statement logically implies all other false statements. While humans seldom let a lie's influence get that far, one piece of misinformation applied effectively and with vigor can go an apallingly long way. A person having two conflicting ideas regarding something may be pardoned for acting illogically about that thing. With all due respect to those who are fond of their particular brand of lie, I suggest that if the truth causes some person to become illogical it is the fault of the lie rather than the truth. Thus, if any statement can be shown to be true, it should not be suppressed merely because a lie was there first. Lies need not be guaranteed undisturbed occupancy.

Now we come to matters of opinion. Here, things are a matter of opinion. Some cautious souls feel that anything that might possibly be a lie should be suppressed; others prefer that nothing that could be true should be banned. Most compromise and censor only those things they find personally upsetting. They naturally claim that they do this for the public welfare. Sometimes they even believe it. Sometimes they're right.

General A would be upset by publication of the plans for our latest nuclear bomb. He therefore classifies them as military secrets, and prevents the truth from being disseminated. General B likewise is disturbed when he considers the details of the operation of his pet motor pool being presented to the general public (and rightly so, for he would have a Board of Inquiry descending upon him soon afterwards). He too clamps military secrecy down upon publication. One of these men is justified in his censorship, while the other is not; and consideration of the two cases may perhaps give us a rule for deciding when censorship is reasonable.

When enemies of our country obtain the plans for our best weapons, we become less able to handle those enemies. If we find out about General B's graft, we can remove a rotten apple from our societal barrel and will thus be in better shape. Censorship is justified when disclosure of information would increase a malefactor's ability to harm us, without making us more fit to handle the malefactor. Likewise, censorship is reasonable when it is shown that possession of a certain class of information leads to a form of irrationality dangerous to society or to individuals. There are many times when the dangerous effects of a certain piece of information may be argued; what is then done depends upon the society. From comparison of people who censor when unsure with those who don't, I prefer that we let such questionable material through. An excessive willingness to censor shows many symptoms of itself being a form of irrationality dangerous to society, and especially to individuals.

We see, then, that censorship is justified in only three situations:

a) For suppression of verifiable and potentially dangerous falsehoods.

b) Whenever distribution of certain facts will give a potential malefactor an increased probability of damaging me (or society) without giving me (o.s.) a commensurate increase in the capability for self-defense.

c) When possession of the facts will lead to dangerous forms of irrationality in such degree as to offset the potential benefits of greater knowledge.

I can see you saying, "Yes, yes, very well--but this only applies to maps and plans and theorems. What about literature?" All literature may be considered to be a form of communication between its creator(s) and its audience. If it has no message, it is harmless. However, most literature does have a message--it may be as simple as "sadism is FUN!", or as complex as the discourses of Kant. Whether the given piece of literature is fun or not relates to censorability only in its effect upon the attentiveness of the audience, and hence the effectiveness of communication. (There are those, of course, that believe it is sinful to have too much fun. We won't pay any attention to them.) All literature says something to its audience; and we may judge its censorability by this message.

Now, what restrictions should be placed upon the contents of comics? Definitely, information which will increase the reader's potential as a malefactor should be forbidden. I dislike the CCA--but I will support in any way I can their stand forbidding advertisements for guns, knives, and the like; and their excessive use in stories. Kids are rather violent little creatures, and I'd rather not have them given ideas or weapons. Remember all the ads comics used to have for switchblade knives? A switchblade is a concealable weapon really useful only for stabbing people, and any kid that has one will be tempted to use it. Also, if he's been subjected to quite a few stories embodying knives he's more likely to think of them when he gets mad at people. The weaponry in Code-approved comics is seldom readily available in the real world; you'll see a hundred pieces of Kryptonite for every plain old rock (used to bash in a skull), a dozen rayguns for every pistol, and 674 deadly boa-constrictors for every knife or bludgeon. People obsessed by super-weapons aren't as likely to use real ones when they get mad. Likewise the ban on glorified and realistic crime. It makes more sense to have the kids thinking along impractical lines when it comes to crime and violence--not only are they less likely to try anything dangerous, but if they do they're more likely to get caught. Can you imagine trying to make a getaway in a supervillain suit?

What else should be forbidden in comics? I think I'll leave that question up to the psychologists. I'm a physicist, and I haven't the faintest idea what causes kids to become dangerously irrational (or just plain dangerous). It's too bad that the one psychologist (Wertham, who else?) really involved in the Code had an axe to grind. I rather suspect that investigation would uphold the Code's stand forbidding racial and religious ridicule, as well as the requirement that good grammar be used whenever possible. But I would like to see a thorough review of the Code's opinions about sex, obscenity, profanity, and the like. No matter who you ask, be it modernist or conservative, he will tell you that our society does not know how to handle sex well. He may think we should be stricter; he may think we should be more liberal. But he will not think we are just right. So we should trust a bunch of rules based on the mores of our present society when nobody likes them? Something seems rotten to me, with a Code which allows transvestism as the main plot element of a story, yet forbids good honest heterosexuality. It isn't consistent--and inconsistency leads to confusion, which in turn leads to irrationality.

* * *

The continuation of this discussion is up to you. If all goes as I hope, this issue of K-a will have several comments upon the first installment of this, to provide a basis for further remarks. If, on the other hand, there is a vast and thundering silence--well, there's no sense in giving you still more of something that bores or annoys you, is there?

Perhaps you recall that page of Instant Printing I had in K-a 15, as well as the cover to K-a 18 (printed at the same place). At any rate several people have written to ask how they could get such printing themselves. Therefore the special sheet included with this issue. It's meant to be complete in itself, but there were a few things I didn't have room for--chiefly the many types of paper available.

Base price: 16 lb. white, blue, canary, goldenrod, pink, and green
20 lb. white, salmon, pink, goldenrod, blue, canary, green, and buff

20¢ per hundred sheets 8½x11 extra charge: 60 lb. white

40¢ per hundred sheets 8½x11 extra charge: 20 lb. white rag content bond
100 lb. Bristol board, white, gold, blue, pink, and tangerine

They will also print on paper you supply (tho they get very very mad if you supply such cruddy paper that it leaves lotsa lint or shredded paper in their presses). This might be useful if you wanted stationery on some special paper. However, the most intriguing use is for cheapie color covers with photo-offset quality. They will print only with black ink, unless you pay them a king's ransom to clean up the presses for some other color. However, black is usually the only color that needs to be really sharp and intense; so if you filled in the other colors with a ditto machine with good register.... It's just a thought, of course. But Stfandom has been known to crossbreed dittos and mimeos in this way with passable results. You'd have to do the ditto work first, because the alcohol in the dittomachine would make a horrid ghastly mess out of everything if it started dissolving the black ink from the photo-offset stage of the process.

I have finally discovered how the pound-weight of paper goes. It is the weight of 500 sheets of 17x22 paper, or 2000 sheets of 8½x11. Until a printer pointed out that 8½x11 was the parochial viewpoint of the herd outside the Profession, and that Printers thought bigger thoughts, it had been a mystery. This might help you figure out postage.

DICK PRYOR, I hope you don't mind this. I'm not making a penny out of the arrangement; it's purely self-defense, because taking the bus all the way downtown is no fun, and enough people have shown signs of asking me to have stuff printed for them to add up to quite a few bus rides. If you have found a way to make money on the deal, and your prices and services are comparable, just tell us--I'm sure most of us would rather a fun made the profit.

KENT RUSSEL, Beowulf the first hero? I don't know quite what Odysseus, Hercules, and Gilgamesh would have to say about that--which is just as well, because in all probability it would be obscene and unmailable. However, an article on Beowulf would be nice. Now, if DAN ALDERSON were to do an article on Norse Mythology in the same issue, we'd really have something!

A friend of mine, one Ken Fletcher, read through the first 3 pages of this contrib and commented that General B was justified in censoring the truth about his motor pool, since that was an act of self-preservation. This is true--cheaters will be expected to censor news of their cheating, moralists writings about sex, Communists word of the successes of Capitalists, Capitalists word of the successes of Communists. They're all justified, in a sense, because their continued well-being depends upon this censorship. What I meant was that we shouldn't let them get away with it.

Achtung! INSTANT PRINTING!

	8½ x 11		8½ x 14		11 x 17	
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500	5.00	7.60	5.90	8.80	9.50	13.50
700	6.30	9.40	7.40	10.80	12.00	16.50
1000	8.25	12.10	9.65	13.80	15.75	21.00
Add'l 1000s	6.50	9.00	7.50	10.00	12.50	15.00

Since that page of INSTANT PRINTING appeared in K-a 15, I've received several inquiries about this service. First, it is very probable that there is one near you. In December there was only one place in Minneapolis offering the service. Right now, there are three. Instant printing is available in Cleveland and Chicago as well. They're spreading, and they're spreading fast. So look in the Yellow Pages, and if the book is more than a few months old, ask Information--and perhaps your local Chamber of Commerce as well, because they aren't always called Instant Printing. Getting this service near home will save you time, money, and effort.

If, however, you are desperate--the people at INSTANT PRINTING here have said they're willing to take mail orders. This means that you will have to arrange everything (including payment) so it can go both ways through the mail. Figure on the printed sheets being mailed out parcel post; this is what my postoffice says is the cheapest permissible way for that weight. It wouldn't hurt if you enclosed a mailing label with the proper addresses already filled in. Detroit is in zone 4 from Minneapolis, while you can find out what zone you're in by asking your freindly local postoffice for Minneapolis' zone. Figure the weight at 1.03 lb per hundred sheets with 20# paper 8½x11, but be sure to add a few ounces for the envelope and maybe 20% for extra copies. (I ordered 100 sheets and got 125 last time--apparently they'd rather have happy customers than the extra paper.) Once you've estimated the weight of the package, go to the Post Office and find out how much the postage will be. Add that to the cost of the printing services you want (be sure to tell them what you want!) and make out a check.

They do have services besides printing available; screening of photographs, for instance (see other side). The price goes as final size of the print, and is: 5x7, $3.50; 8x10, $5.00; 10x12, $6.50; 11x14, $7.50; 14x17, $9.00; and 16x20, $10. You'll have to have them send back the screened print for you to put in place on the art, because they do not do pasteup work. Better send your photos in a nice sturdy envelope (which'll also take the screened Velox print) along with a return address sticker. You can put more than one photograph into one screened print, as long as they're all to get the same enlargement. Folding, collating, and wire-stitching (stapling) are also available. Folding is $2 setup plus: 8½x11, 15¢/100; 8½x14, 20¢/100; and 11x17, 25¢/100. I understand their folder can do tricks, so you better check with them what you want. Wirestitching costs 50¢ per hundred books with a $2 minimum, while collating is 25¢ per hundred sheets with a $1.50 minimum.

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1 **TYPEWRITTEN COPY** – Use a carbon ribbon electric typewriter for the best reproduction. Cloth ribbon electric typewriter will reproduce not quite as well as carbon ribbon, but generally satisfactorily. Manual typewriter copy is generally gray, and a little difficult to reproduce cleanly. Before using your typewriter, clean the keys and use a very black ribbon.

2. **REPRINTS** – Printed matter without photos will generally reproduce very well.

3 **PICTURES** – Printed black & white pictures on "slick" paper will generally reproduce well. Pictures on newsprint will reproduce fairly well, depending on the quality of the original picture. The personnel at Instant Printing Service can usually determine what will reproduce.

4 **PHOTOGRAPHS** – Snap shots, glossies, almost any kind of photo can be reproduced by using a pre-screened or velox print, which we can make for you at an extra charge.

5 **BALL POINT PEN** – Copy prepared with black ball point pen reproduces well. Do not use blue ball point pen. Dark red will generally reproduce, but black is the best.

6 **MARKING PEN** – Black marking pens with wicks (Pentel and similar makes) reproduce very well.

7 **PENCIL** – Pencil copy is difficult to reproduce well, because the line is generally uneven. If pencil must be used, make sure you use a very black pencil and the widest possible stroke.

8 **GUIDE LINES** – Use light green, yellow, or light blue pencil for guide lines. Keep the lines as faint as possible.

9. **PASTEUPS** – A "pasteup" is a combination of the various "copy" elements assembled and glued down in position exactly as you wish the final printed piece to appear. In making a pasteup be sure to remove all excess rubber cement with a rubber cement pickup. You can get one at any art supply store. If left on the pasteup, rubber cement will very often show up as a smudge on the finished printed piece. Clean up your pasteup with art gum eraser after removing excess rubber cement.

10 **COLORS** – Very dark colors – black, brown, red, dark blue – will reproduce. These same colors in light shades – gray, tan, pink, light blue, green, or yellow – will not reproduce. Printed colored pictures will not as a rule reproduce well.

11 **SCALING** – Our process enables us to reduce your original copy by as much as 50%. We will be pleased to assist you in determining what size to make your original pasteup when a reduction in the printed piece is desired. We can also enlarge your copy by as much as 10%. Consult us.

Copyright, 1965

In the current influx of interest for spy-detective adventure features, the works of Mickey Spillane continue to sell at an overwhelming pace. Spillane has made many appearances on television and radio. And has shown that he is as colorful a personnality as his creations-many people confuse the real man with his famed hero, Mike Hammer.

He is a former New York police reporter turned best-selling author and money-making actor. And, as fandom knows, he did work fot the comics in the forties. (Mike Hammer evoved from Mike Danger, a unsuccessful comic creation. And he mentioned his work on such as Sub-Mariner.) But, he has proven that, above all, he is truthful and realistic.

"I'm commercial," he says. "I write for only one reason-to make money. The critics bore me. I pay no attention to them. The only praise I want is the praise I'm getting-the ringing of the cash registers in the book stores." He said that critical raves or pans have no effect on the sale of his books. Atleast, not his books. "I write for the mass audience. I don't take pride in what I write, but I do take pleasure from it. It's always a pleasure when my books sell in the millions. " ("Days of the Guns" put his titles into the 39 million sales market in soft cover editions.)

Although he hesitated to admit it, Spillane devoted only three days to the writing of "Day of the Guns." "That doesn't sound exactly good," he said, "when other authors claim it takes them two or three years to produce a manuscript. That's nonsense. I never rewrite. Sometimes I'll change two or three lines in a novel, but that's all. Anything that has to be rewritten isn't worth reading in the first place."

Spillane says that he usually writes the ending of his books first. "Too many authors start at the beginning and get tired before they are through," he explains. "Then I reach that point, all I have to do is reach in a drawer and pull out a fresh ending that I've already written."

Spillane has ieght to ten books written ahead, kept in his vault. "Ian Fleming died with only one book on the shelf. I'm making sure that doesn't happen to me," He was sorry at the passing of Flem - ing; he enjoys competition, he feels it makes him more alert and active.

Detective Mike Hammer has been Spillane's popular hero. But, in "Day of the Guns," he came up with a new hero-Tiger Mann, described as "a master spy and paid killer." Once you get a character at a certain level," he says, "you can't do much with him. That's what happened to Mike Hammer, and why I turned up with Tiger Mann. Now

I've got a new guy to work on." (Spillane has sold the television rights to Tiger Mann to Four Star Productions, and he hopes actor Lee Marvin will star in the proposed TV series.)

Spillane has been criticized for his emphasis on sex. However,he denies that he writes sexy novels. "Pornography was never a saleable commodity," he says. It's no good when sex is thrown into a book just for the sake of sales. The story is the important thing. My characters happen to like sex. That's the only reason it's in the books." He says his favorite novel, "The Prisoner of Zenda," has no sex at all. "It isn't really necessary," he says, "when the story doesn't require it. But I must admit that Mike Hammer and Tiger Mann require it."

With the novels, last season he wrote a screenplay and a Broadway musical. The musical (musical-mystery) is titled "Down With McGinty." When, and if, it appears on Broadway the star will be his wife, Sherri. She is blonde, beautiful, and 23. Spillane is 48.

Spillane, also, has acting experience. He has starred in most of the film versions of the Hammer novels ("The Girl Hunters," etc.) and plans to star in an upcoming Tiger Mann film. "Acting is part of my profession," he says. "After all, a best-selling novelist is in a phase of the entertainment business. I'm not an actor, and hope I never become one, but I've done so much radio and television work in connection with boosting my books that playing a screen role comes natural to me."

Spillane prefers to spend his time at his home in Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina, rather than in the big cities he writes about in his novels. "I like the sunshine and sand in South Carolina," he says. "New York is too tough for me. It's too much of a rat race. But I have to admit that my experience there as a police reporter provided me with much of the material I use in my books."

Spillane's favorite hobby is racing souped up cars. And he keeps trim, and hopeful, by diving for sunken treasure. Also, he enjoys firing guns and practicing fencing. At one time he purchased a Mustang P-51 fighter;from World War II, one of the fastest propeller-driven aircraft before the jets. He still loves and pilots the Mustang, using to get him where he wants to travel.

* * * * *

No one person has caused more unanimous distain than the friendly Fredric Wertham, M.D. With all the comments printed I have been wondering how many editions were published of "Seduction of the Innocent." My copy came from a British fan, who had obtained it at a library book-sale, and has an introduction by Randolph Churchill. I do not know the publisher; if originally listed, the page is now missing.

* * * * *

The following letter appeared in the letter column, "In The Mail-bag," of the Boston Record-American, December, 1965:

Revere- Shazam! We, of the Captain Marvel Fan Club, Chapter No.312, hereby angrily protest the innocuous choice of programming of one of the national television networks.

What are we mad about? To begin with, a series about "Batman" is starting next year on television. This is an outrage, when such a goon like Batman (and his boy wonder, Robin, ha!), deserves a prime time network spot. Who's going to play him-Woody Allen or Wally Cox?

Equal time is not too much to ask for our hero Captain Marvel is it? "Down with Batman," we say-"Shazam! (Signed) M.M.

The following reply, submitted by me, with some revisions and editing, appeared on January 12:

Lawrence- Recently, the Mailbag had a letter calling for a Captain Marvel series for television instead of the new Batman series.

No matter how much it would be welcome, a Captain Marvel program could never be created. Legal entanglements have forbidden the use of Captain Marvel's image since 1953.

Also, I wish to oppose the derogatory remarks of the already mentioned Mailbagger concerning Batman. The talents of this figure "of the night," are unlike the mystically-oriented powers of Captain Marvel, and other artificially produced powers of other characters. Bruce "Batman" Wayne's powers are produced by his own talents. His acute mental and physical prowess is derived from sheer personnal developement and dedication. He is the ultimate in opposition to the apathy that seems to run rampant in our society.

There is no better choice for a television hero than Batman. I shall watch the twice-weekly show with great interest. - D.R.

A description of the "legal entanglements" of the Captain Marvel case (with a plug for Alter-Ego) was not printed. Also, a request for information on the Captain Marvel Fan Club was stricken; And I have received no personnal reply from the newspaper.

* * * * *

WANTED: "You Can Do It, Charlie Brown; Sunday's Fun Day, Charlie Brown;"Pogo Extra"; "Positively"; Judomaster #1; Capt. Storm #4; Captain Atom #78; Mystery In Space #53-57 & 59; Challengers #1-10; Flash #105, 107, 109 & 110; first Strange Adventures with Star Hawkins by Kane. FOR BID OR TRADE: "Bald Iggle" by Capp (VG).

* * * * *

The most surprising, and disappointing, news of the last few months came with the report of Steve Ditko discontinuing his association with Marvel. All of his fans (everyone, including myself) are sorry at such a great loss. There can be no doubt that his work was responsible for much of the success of Spiderman and Dr. Strange. Unlike most other strips, replacement will truly be difficult. None can ever quite equal the accomplishment of Ditko. But there are those capable of retaining much of the quality, and, who are already employed at Marvel. Because of his fine and stylish work on Daredevil, Bill Everett is my choice to handle Spiderman. With the flair he presented in the old Marvel horror titles (and occasionally in his current work), the artist most suited for Dr. Strange is Don Heck. Another who could be used, if available, is Alex Toth.

* * * * *

Space War was dropped; the numbering continued, with the first issue of Fightin' 5 becoming #29. Six-Gun Heroes ended with #33; Gunmaster took over with it's fifth issue, and became #34. Unusual Tales ended with #49; this numbering continued, with Blue Beetle #6 becoming #50. Strange Suspense Stories ended with #77; this title was replaced by Captain Atom, the first issue numbered 78. And, worst of all, Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds was converted to Son of Vulcan, with the same numbering; Thunderbolt took over, with #2 becoming #51. And, DC has gotten into the act with the double numbering of the 80-Page Giant.

I have never thought of attempting to compile a comic index. And the current confusion has made this a permanent decision. I wish good luck to all who engage in such endeavors; you have my sympathy.

* * * * *

We viewers are fortunate and can be thankful to CBS for broadcasting "Charlie Brown's Christmas." Charles Schulz's script was excellent. The warmth and humor of the strip was well displayed, producing a program delightful to both young and old. The popularity of this effort has persuaded the network to schedule this for an annual showing. New episodes are also being planned. The next special, in June, entitled "Good Grief, Charlie Brown," will have to deal with the All-Star Baseball game. This will be followed by a Halloween "Pumpkin" special.

* * * * *

Fans of Flash Gordon and the Flash Gordon films are recommended to purchase a copy of Screen Facts Album #1. This is a collection of scenes from the three serials, featuring Buster Crabbe as Flash Gordon. It is a bargain at 75¢. This can be obtained from Screen Facts, P.O. Box 154, Kew Gardens, New York.

* * * * *

ALONG THE APA-IAN WAY Jerry Bails

In time all good duplicators give out, and it looks like now is the time for mine. Having served me faithfully since ALTER EGO #2 back in 1961, my duper has finally developed a chronic case of super-fluiditis. For reasons undiscoverable to me, the old machine now runs wild--thoroughly soaking every sheet that runs through it. Controlling bleed-through has become an impossible task. Consequently, this contribution may well have to violate one of my own sacred rules and be printed on one side only. It frightens me to think of the implications of this apparently insoluble problem when next I receive one of those hefty contributions from the Ryan household.))Shutter((If anyone can suggest a remedy short of a major overhaul, which it had not too long ago, please let me hear from you. I'm losing patience fast, and I'm just about ready to chuck the whole thing. --Which really wouldn't be such a bad idea, as I'm finding my professional life becoming increasingly demanding of my time. Already I find I must abandon any plans to publish a new fanzine (THE PANELOLOGIST), but hopefully the material can appear in one of the numerous offset fanzines that are now appearing.

I hear word of an underground fanzine that is being prepared. I understand that it will reprint rare comics stories from the Golden Age, and be distributed clandestinely free-of-charge to serious comics collectors. Considering that Ed Aprill is now hearing from those who hold the rights to the Buck Rogers title, I suspect that this underground zine is going to cause quite a stir. With the comic market what it is today as a result of the Batman-craze, it doesn't strike me that this is a very good time to risk violating copyright and trademark rights. However, I can't help but hope that the generous fan who is risking a law suit gets away with it to the extent of causing a drop in the prices of the early comics. It might also prompt the copyright holders to reprint more of this early material. I can't imagine the market being any riper.

Three very interesting and lengthy phone calls from New York in one week filled me in on the Superman musical, which I couldn't make because of work, the upcoming TV shows planned by Marvel and DC, and numerous goings-on in NEW YORK, including plans for the 1966 COMICON. I know of at least ten cartoon shows on the drawing board for fall TV: Plastic Man (a DC property), Metamorpho, Wonder Woman, Flash, Superboy, Ironman, Capt. America, Hulk, Dr. Strange (if memory serves me correctly), Namor, and possibly the Fantastic Four if Hanna-Barbera comes up with acceptable scripts. Spidey may be live, as may be a new series based on a future Superman. This latter I haven't heard any word on, however, since last summer when I lunched with Mort Weisinger, so I'm less certain about it. Add to the list Green Hornet, and undoubtably the efforts of other companies to capitalize on the craze, and you can easily predict, I think, a big boost in comics sales later this year. Both Harvey (under Joe Simon) and King Features (under Bill Harris) plan to hit the stands with new comic books about July. Hey, I forgot Aquaman. He too will hit the animated airwaves this fall. It's gonna be a VERY BIG YEAR!

I've done a bit of TV myself lately. One of the more broad-minded teachers of English in the Detroit Public Schools invited me to discuss the comics and the fanzines for her 11th grade English classes--an audience of about 350 at 8:30 in the morning. The lesson was part of a series dealing with the popular media. The workbook for the course included a reproduction of the St. Louis article interviewing Roy Thomas. Since I was mentioned, the teacher thought it might spark some real interest if I were to put in an actual appearance before her class. So, with my Spidey poster to back me up, I discussed what I thought to be the advantages to a youngster of publishing a fanzine, or just writing letters to the editor, or better, corresponding with others who have similar interests. As a direct result of the show I've received about a dozen inquiries, ranging from "How can I break into the comics?" to "Can you give me the name of a comics fan in France?"

George Pacinda tells me that although he has seen "It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Superman" about 6 times, he can't bring himself to write a review that he feels like submitting for publication. So, I guess we'll have to wait to hear from Roy who went in my place. The reviews I've seen range from "It's a fun show!" to mild praise to "It's a bomb!" I suspect that like most musical comedies it lacks a story line that can give rise to inspiring music. The songs I've heard are nothing special. There is no genuine feeling between the principal characters, I understand, so the is little basis for the one outstanding love ballad that so often makes the American musical. I don't know how others feel, but for me there are darn few so-called novelty or "cute" tunes that don't wear thin pretty fast. It takes a special wit to turn out something like "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat," "It Ain't Necessarily So," "Gesticulate," "The Joker," etc. I guess I won't know until I hear a recording of the whole score. I have yet to see an original cast recording offerred for sale. Has it appeared?

In order to give everyone ample time to meet our deadline, I've decided to depart from our strict 30-day publishing schedule, unless I hear strong objections. On the contents page I'll give the deadline for the next issue (which will not ordinarily be the first of the month, or any other definite date for that matter). I intend to give everyone a chance to make the next issue if he so desires. This means I'll be allowing for 3rd class travel-time both ways to California plus sufficient time to prepare a speedy contribution. I would still not advise waiting for one issue before preparing material for the next. Those of you in California can inform me if I am not allowing sufficient time. I will still willingly hold an issue as much as a week to accomodate a really timely contribution, if you'll let me know by card before the official deadline, and speed your contribution along by air if necessary to meet the extended deadline. Hokay?

Because of space limitations, I must ask that (1) we reduce print runs to more nearly membership size, or (2) we allow limited sale of extra copies, in accordance with some just scheme. May I have your response to these alternatives?

Rot

ISSUE NUMBER 19
APRIL, 1966

Pardon me, friend, could I borrow your flashlight? I need a fix...